

What is claimed is:

CLAIMS

1. A method for selecting a section from a streamed broadcast program,  
5 the method comprising:  
    receiving a streamed broadcast program;  
    rendering the received streamed broadcast program on a display;  
    selecting a section from the received streamed broadcast program  
substantially when the section is rendered on the display; and  
10      producing an indication signal which enables identification of the  
section based on a time at which selection of the section was carried out with  
respect to rendering progress of the streamed broadcast program on the display.
2. The method according to claim 1 and also comprising:  
15      identifying the section based on the indication signal.
3. The method according to claim 2 and wherein said identifying  
comprises:  
    computing, based on the indication signal, a selection time  
20      representing the time at which the selection of the section was carried out within a  
rendering period of the streamed broadcast program on the display; and  
    recognizing the section as a discrete section which, in a sequential  
series of discrete sections constructed from the streamed broadcast program,  
corresponds to the selection time.  
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4. The method according to claim 3 and wherein each of the sections in  
the sequential series of discrete sections is tagged with a unique identification  
(UID), and the recognizing comprises determining a UID of the discrete section.
- 30 5. The method according to any of claims 2 - 4 and also comprising:

transmitting, in response to the identifying, a representation of the section to at least one of the following: an external device; and an external medium.

5 6. The method according to claim 5 and wherein the representation of the section comprises one of the following: the section formatted in a format that is suitable for rendering on a rendering device; metadata related to the section; and the section formatted in a format that is suitable for rendering on a rendering device and associated with metadata related to the section.

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7. The method according to any of claims 2 - 4 and also comprising:  
finding, in response to the identifying, a replacement section that relates to the section; and

transmitting a representation of the replacement section to at least  
15 one of the following: an external device; and an external medium.

8. The method according to claim 5 and wherein the external device comprises at least one of the following: a mobile telephone; a computing device; an entertainment device; a printer; and a communication device.

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9. The method according to claim 5 and wherein the external medium comprises at least one of the following: a medium in the external device; and a medium attached to the external device.

25 10. The method according to claim 5 and wherein the external medium comprises a memory stick.

11. The method according to claim 5 and also comprising receiving the representation of the section embedded in at least one of the following: a  
30 Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS) message; a Wireless Application Protocol

(WAP) push message; a JAVA™ application; a Short Messaging Service (SMS) message; and an electronic-mail (e-mail) message.

12. The method according to claim 5 and wherein the representation of the section is suitable for at least one of the following: playing on the external device; displaying on the external device; editing via the external device; and transmitting to another external device.

13. The method according to claim 5 and also comprising:  
10 editing the representation of the section.

14. The method according to claim 13 and wherein the editing comprises at least one of the following: cropping a displayed area of the representation of the section; reducing a displayed area of the representation of the section; and  
15 enlarging a displayed area of the representation of the section.

15. The method according to claim 13 and also comprising returning editing values of section parameters in response to the editing.

20 16. The method according to claim 15 and wherein the returning comprises returning the editing values to a server.

17. The method according to claim 16 and wherein the server is associated with a headend.  
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18. The method according to claim 16 and wherein the server is comprised in a headend.

19. The method according to claim 15 and wherein the editing values  
30 comprise at least one of the following: picture display coordinates; picture size

information; information regarding picture elements positions; and audio parameters.

20. The method according to claim 15 and also comprising:

5 processing the representation of the section and the editing values to produce a result comprising at least one of the following: an edited representation of the section; and a representation of a new section; and transmitting the result, in response to the processing, to at least one of the external device and the external medium.

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21. The method according to claim 5 and also comprising:

transmitting a request to receive at least one of the following: a representation of a section preceding the section in the streamed broadcast program; and a representation of a section following the section in the streamed broadcast program.

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22. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the section comprises at least one of the following: an audio section; a video section; an audio and video (A/V) section; and a multimedia section.

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23. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the section comprises at least one of the following: a video frame; at least a portion of a tune; at least a portion of a video clip; at least a portion of an audio program; and at least a portion of a television program.

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24. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the streamed broadcast program comprises at least one of the following: a streamed audio program; a streamed video program; a streamed A/V program; and a streamed multimedia program.

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25. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the streamed broadcast program comprises at least one of the following: a television program; an audio program; a video clip; an interactive television program; a multimedia program; and a multimedia presentation.

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26. The method according to any of claims 2 - 4 and wherein the identifying comprises identifying the section within an identification error range.

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27. The method according to claim 3 or claim 4 and wherein:  
the streamed broadcast program comprises an analog program;  
the selecting comprises pressing a key on a telephone keypad; and  
the computing comprises computing the selection time at a voice response system.

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28. The method according to claim 27 and wherein the analog program comprises at least one of the following: an audio program; a video program; an A/V program; and a multimedia program.

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29. The method according to claim 3 or claim 4 and wherein:  
the streamed broadcast program comprises a digital program;  
the selecting comprises pressing a key on a remote control (RC); and  
the computing comprises computing the selection time at at least one of the following: a set-top box (STB); and a headend.

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30. The method according to claim 29 and wherein the digital program comprises at least one of the following: an audio program; a video program; an A/V program; and a multimedia program.

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31. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the producing comprises producing the indication signal at an STB.

32. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the producing comprises producing the indication signal at a headend.

33. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the  
5 producing comprises producing the indication signal at a voice response system.

34. The method according to any of claims 2 - 4 and wherein the identifying comprises identifying the section at at least one of the following: a headend; and an STB.

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35. The method according to claim 1 and wherein the producing comprises producing the indication signal unless the streamed broadcast program is marked by a mark forbidding selection of the section.

15 36. The method according to claim 1 and wherein the producing comprises producing the indication signal only if the streamed broadcast program is marked by a mark allowing selection of the section.

37. The method according to claim 35 or claim 36 and wherein the mark  
20 comprises a metadata code.

38. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and also comprising:  
generating, on the display, a visual effect in response to the  
selecting.

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39. The method according to claim 38 and wherein the visual effect comprises at least one of the following: a flashy visual effect; a visual blitz effect; and a flashy visual blitz effect.

30 40. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and also comprising:

inviting a user to enter a device identification code identifying an external device to which to transmit a representation of the section.

41. The method according to claim 40 and wherein the inviting  
5 comprises displaying, on the display, a message inviting the user to enter the device identification code.

42. The method according to claim 40 and wherein the inviting  
10 comprises playing a message inviting the user to enter the device identification code.

43. The method according to claim 5 and wherein the transmitting  
comprises:  
15 producing an indication of agreement by a user to pay for the transmitting; and  
transmitting the representation of the section in response to the producing.

44. The method according to claim 13 and wherein the editing comprises  
20 editing the representation of the section via one of the following: the external device; and an STB.

45. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and also comprising,  
prior to the selecting, inviting a user to select a desired section.

46. The method according to claim 45 and wherein the inviting  
25 comprises displaying a message inviting the user to select the desired section.

47. The method according to claim 45 and wherein the inviting  
30 comprises playing a message inviting the user to select the desired section.

48. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and also comprising, prior to the selecting, accepting user input information comprising at least one of the following: a user's mobile telephone number; a source of a video signal received at one of the display and a user's STB; a user's mobile telephone type; an indication  
5 indicating a mobile operator that provides cellular services for the user's mobile telephone; and a target mobile telephone number.

49. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the section comprises a plurality of sub-sections, and the selecting comprises selecting a start  
10 sub-section and a stop sub-section from the plurality of sub-sections.

50. The method according to claim 49 and also comprising determining a timeout stop sub-section if the stop sub-section is not selected within a timeout period.

15 51. The method according to claim 49 and wherein the selecting comprises selecting the start sub-section by pressing on a first key of an input device, and selecting the stop sub-section by pressing on a second key of the input device.

20 52. The method according to claim 49 and wherein the selecting comprises selecting the start sub-section by pressing once on a key of an input device, and selecting the stop sub-section by pressing again on the key of the input device.

25 53. The method according to any of claims 1 - 4 and wherein the display comprises at least one of the following: a television; a monitor of a computing device; a display of a mobile telephone; a display of an entertainment device; and a display of a communication device.

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54. The method according to claim 5 and wherein the transmitting comprises associating branding information identifying a provider of the section with the representation of the section.

5 55. The method according to claim 54 and wherein the branding information comprises an owner rights code.

56. The method according to claim 4 and wherein the UID comprises an identifier based on a combination of values obtained from at least one of the  
10 following: a time code; a frame counter; and a discontinuation counter.

57. The method according to claim 4 and wherein the UID comprises an identifier derived from a received broadcast transmission.

15 58. The method according to claim 4 and wherein the UID comprises an identifier derived from time information provided by an external clock.

59. The method according to claim 3 or claim 4 and wherein the computing also comprises performing computations correcting at least one of the  
20 following: synchronization inaccuracies in at least one clock of at least one sub-system that is involved in computation of the selection time; and effect of latencies in the at least one sub-system.

60. The method according to claim 4 and also comprising transmitting  
25 the UID of the section via at least one of the following: a return path of an STB; a wired communication link; and a wireless communication link.

61. The method according to claim 3 or claim 4 and wherein the recognizing comprises:

30 finding a first preferred section and a second preferred section from a set of preferred sections representing the best sections of the sequential series of

discrete sections, the first preferred section being the nearest preferred section before the discrete section that corresponds to the selection time, and the second preferred section being the nearest preferred section after the discrete section that corresponds to the selection time; and

5            selecting the section as one of the first and the second preferred sections which is closer in the sequential series of discrete sections to the discrete section that corresponds to the selection time.

62.            The method according to claim 61 and wherein the set of preferred  
10    sections comprises predefined preferred sections.

63.            The method according to claim 61 and wherein the selecting  
comprises selecting the section as one of the first and the second preferred sections  
in response to a determination of the streamed broadcast program as a preview.

15            64.            The method according to claim 61 and also comprising enabling  
linked access to external information via the section.

65.            A method for obtaining at an external device a representation of a  
20    section, which section is obtained from a streamed broadcast program rendered on  
a display, the method comprising:

                 selecting, in a snapshot selection mode, a section from the streamed  
broadcast program substantially when the section is rendered on the display;  
                 identifying the section based on a time at which the section was  
25    snapshot-selected with respect to rendering progress of the streamed broadcast  
program on the display; and  
                 transmitting a representation of the section to the external device.

66.            A method for preparing a streamed program in a format suitable for  
30    transmission of discrete sections, the method comprising:  
                 decoding a streamed program into a plurality of discrete sections;

associating, in synchronization, a UID with each discrete section in the plurality of discrete sections; and

enabling storage and retrieval of each of the plurality of discrete sections through reference to a UID.

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67. The method according to claim 66 and wherein the streamed program comprises one of the following: an analog program; and a digital program.

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68. The method according to claim 67 and wherein each of the analog program and the digital program comprises at least one of the following: an audio program; a video program; an A/V program; and a multimedia program.

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69. The method according to any of claims 66 - 68 and also comprising: preparing a set of preferred sections representing the best sections of the plurality of discrete sections.

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70. The method according to any of claims 66 - 68 and wherein the decoding comprises decoding the streamed program only if the streamed program is marked by a mark allowing transmission of discrete sections.

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The method according to claim 66 and wherein:  
the streamed program comprises an MPEG encoded program; and  
the enabling comprises enabling storage of MPEG sequences.

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72. Apparatus for selecting a section from a streamed broadcast program, the apparatus comprising:

a receiving and rendering device receiving a streamed broadcast program and rendering the received streamed broadcast program on a display;

a user selection unit enabling selection of a section from the received streamed broadcast program substantially when the section is rendered on the display; and

5 a controller producing an indication signal which enables identification of the section based on a time at which selection of the section was carried out with respect to rendering progress of the streamed broadcast program on the display.

73. A system for transmitting a representation of a section, which  
10 section is obtained from a streamed broadcast program rendered on a display, the system comprising:

a user selection unit enabling selection, in a snapshot selection mode, of a section from the streamed broadcast program substantially when the section is rendered on the display;

15 an identifier unit identifying the section based on a time at which the section was snapshot-selected with respect to rendering progress of the streamed broadcast program on the display; and

a transmitting unit transmitting a representation of the section to an external device.

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74. Apparatus for preparing a streamed program in a format suitable for transmission of discrete sections, the apparatus comprising:

a decoder decoding a streamed program into a plurality of discrete sections;

25 a unique identification (UID) control unit associating, in synchronization, a UID with each discrete section in the plurality of discrete sections; and

a database interface enabling storage in a section database and retrieval from the section database of each of the plurality of discrete sections  
30 through reference to a UID.